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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-2/REA/NMJIC-J2//  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J5/RUE//  
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FOR SCA/CEN (PERRY)  
ANKARA FOR AGRICULTURE COUNSELOR JAMES HIGGISTON  
TASHKENT FOR ESTH (PUTNAM)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: EAGR ETRD PGOV KFLU TX  
SUBJECT: WHO EXPERTS ASSIST IN TURKMENISTAN'S  
PREPAREDNESS FOR AI

REFTEL:        A) ASHGABAT 361 AND PREVIOUS  
                  B) 05 STATE 153802

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SUMMARY

11. (U) PER REFTEL B, POST PROVIDES A WEEKLY FOLLOW-UP  
ON AVIAN INFLUENZA. THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL  
INDUSTRY (MOHMI) AND THE WHO CO-SPONSORED A SEMINAR ON  
LABORATORY DIAGNOSIS AND THE PREVENTION OF AVIAN FLU  
APRIL 4-7. THE SEMINAR GATHERED OVER 100 PARTICIPANTS,  
INCLUDING EMPLOYEES OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHCARE SECTOR,  
SPECIALISTS ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND  
SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES,  
WHICH ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL AI  
PREVENTION PLAN. END SUMMARY.

WHO EXPERTS PRAISE TURKMENISTAN'S HEALTH PROGRAM?

12. (U) WHO EXPERTS NICOLAS FINN, CLAIRE KILPATRICK, AND  
ELLISON BIRMINGHAM HELD A TEACHING SEMINAR ON AI AND  
PANDEMIC FLU BASED ON THE UNITED KINGDOM EXPERIENCE, AND  
ALSO VISITED THE NATIONAL VETERINARY LABORATORY DURING  
THE APRIL 4-7 AI SEMINAR. IN THEIR APRIL 10 INTERVIEW TO  
THE NEUTRALNYI TURKMENISTAN STATE NEWSPAPER, THE EXPERTS  
SAID THAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES, CARRIED OUT UNDER THE  
GOTX'S HEALTH PROGRAM, SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE RISK OF  
AVIAN FLU IN TURKMENISTAN. EXPERT BIRMINGHAM SAID THAT  
SHE WAS PLEASED WITH SOME LABORATORY SETS AND GAVE  
UNSPECIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL AI REFERENCE  
LABORATORY STAFF. THE EXPERTS SAID THEY WERE IMPRESSED  
BY TURKMENISTAN'S MODERN MEDICAL CENTERS AND EXPRESSED  
HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT  
PRESIDENT NIYAZOV'S AMBITIOUS HEALTH PROGRAM.

WHO'S REAL MISSION

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¶3. (SBU) ACCORDING TO USAID'S HEALTH SPECIALIST WHO MET WITH THE WHO EXPERTS ON APRIL 11, THE PURPOSE OF THE WHO TRIP WAS TO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF TURKMENISTAN'S AI RESPONSE. THE TEAM INTENDED TO VISIT AI REFERENCE LABORATORIES, AND MEET WITH LOCAL EXPERTS AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS; HOWEVER, THE MOHMI TURNED THEIR PROGRAM INTO A TEACHING SEMINAR.

GOTX ATTENDS INTERNATIONAL AI CONFERENCE  
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¶4. (U) On April 12, The United Nations Regional Information Networks (IRIN), a humanitarian news agency covering sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and Iraq, reported from Ankara that Turkmenistan will attend an international conference on regional cooperation in fighting bird flu, scheduled for June 12-13 in Almaty.

Comment  
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¶5. (SBU) Post is disheartened that the GOTX continues to play games with the threat and prevention of AI. Misrepresenting WHO activities and most likely misquoting the experts in the newspapers, does nothing to inspire confidence among concerned parties that the GOTX is taking adequate action. End Comment.

JACOBSON